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[Review of] The Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music

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Outstanding Title!

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Orig

The Guinness encyclopedia of popular music, ed. by Colin Larkin. [2nd ed.].

Guinness Publishing, 1995. (Dist. by Stockton) 6v. 4,991 p bibl index ISBN

1561591769, \$495.00

To the first edition (CH, Mar'93), issued only three years ago, this edition adds two volumes. More than 70 percent of the original entries have been revised by 30 contributors (reduced from the first edition's 82), making style more consistent across the entries. Many discographies now include record labels, but the British label is often the only one listed (e.g., the William Orbit entry gives the N-Gram label, but neither the UK Virgin distributor nor the US Discovery label). Some birth and death dates have been added, as have selected videos, and emphasis added for reggae, Latin, and African pop artists. About half the errors this reviewer found in the first edition have been corrected, but entries for Stealin' Horses, Three Dog Night drummer Floyd Sneed, and KGB are still incorrect. Several significant artists are still omitted (David Baerwald, Luna, Poi Dog Pondering, Letters to Cleo); Larkin's preface points out that about 26,000 artists' entries are not yet prepared. This is very much a work in progress, with expected new and expensive editions adding new information (Larkin projects a 20-volume 4th edition). Nonetheless, no other work approaches *Guinness's* coverage. Most entries are excellent surveys, and volume 6 has useful artist and subject bibliographies. Supplemental volumes would have been more awkward to use but less expensive. Essential for any serious collection of popular music.

--R. A. Aken, *University of Kentucky*

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